

### Corporate Culture and Public Relations

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Korolko, V., & Nekrasova, O. (2009). Corporate Culture and Public Relations. In Y. Golovakha (Ed.), *Ukrainian Sociological Review 2006-2007* (pp. 105-122). Kiev: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-106630>

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# **Corporate Culture and Public Relations\***

### *Abstract*

*Analyzing American publications dealing with the concept of excellent public relations, the authors trace the development of organizational culture and its connection with societal culture, as well as analyze theoretical and methodological issues of corporate culture and its impact on public relations in an organization. Special attention is paid to some ways in which professional PR departments can become the source of progressive countercultures inside the organization capable of changing a prevailing culture in the organization to make it more excellent.*

The study of culture phenomenon has a long tradition. But latterly interest to the culture concept has acquired a more pragmatic trend.

First, the culture concept has begun studied as a key variable that affects organizational processes. Academicians started to use the concept in their attempt to study the many facets of organizations going beyond their regular economic functions. The need for getting a cultural perspective of organizations was felt to be essential when traditional theories such as *contingency theory* failed to resolve more profound organizational problems.

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Translated and edited by the author Valentyn Korolko from the Ukrainian text "Korporatyvna kul'tura i zv'yazky z hromads'kistiu", *Sotsiolohiia: teoriia, metody, marketynh*, 2007, № 1, pp. 115–129.

Second, the factor that acted as a catalyst in hastening researchers to view organizations as cultural entities was an eventual shift in the balance of leading global economy “players”. Specifically the swift rise of Japan as an economic power spawned interest to uniqueness of its management style.

Third, the mushrooming of multinational and transnational corporations has induced managers to see themselves as members of global economy and spurred attention to business functioning in multicultural environment and, in turn, raised interest in the concept of organizational culture.

But it is necessary to mention that attempts to identify different types of business cultures in organizations were made mainly through a combination of limited dimensions. Concentrating attention on the main factors determining organizational processes — both internal and external to an organization — the researchers made only separate uncoordinated efforts to find a conceptual link between organizational culture and practice of public relations, which have a considerable effect on development of this or that type of corporate culture. Among these studies it is necessary to mention an attempt of the American scholar James E. Grunig and his colleagues to systematize factors influencing the choice of a model of public relations made by an organization (see Fig. 1 below) [1].

This figure shows that Grunig concentrates his attention on conceptual links between culture, public relations and other organizational processes that affect public relations. The organization exists in social environment and has an interdependent relationship with elements of the environment whose goals and interests are often inconsistent with those of the organization. Expressed in terms of systems analysis, this means that the environment supplies inputs to an organization (by providing raw materials for production, labor force, etc.) and provides demand for outputs that are vital both for environment and for sustaining the organization.

Such a symbiotic interdependence between the environment and the organization is not always simple and clearly defined. For example, such elements in the environment as political parties, special interest groups and so on could cause the imposition of political or governmental regulations that restrict organizational processes and constrain organizational autonomy. As for public relations practitioners, they as boundary spanners have one foot in the organization and the other in the environment, constantly interacting with constituencies within and outside the organization. They, therefore, play a crucial role in managing an organization's interdependence with its environment.

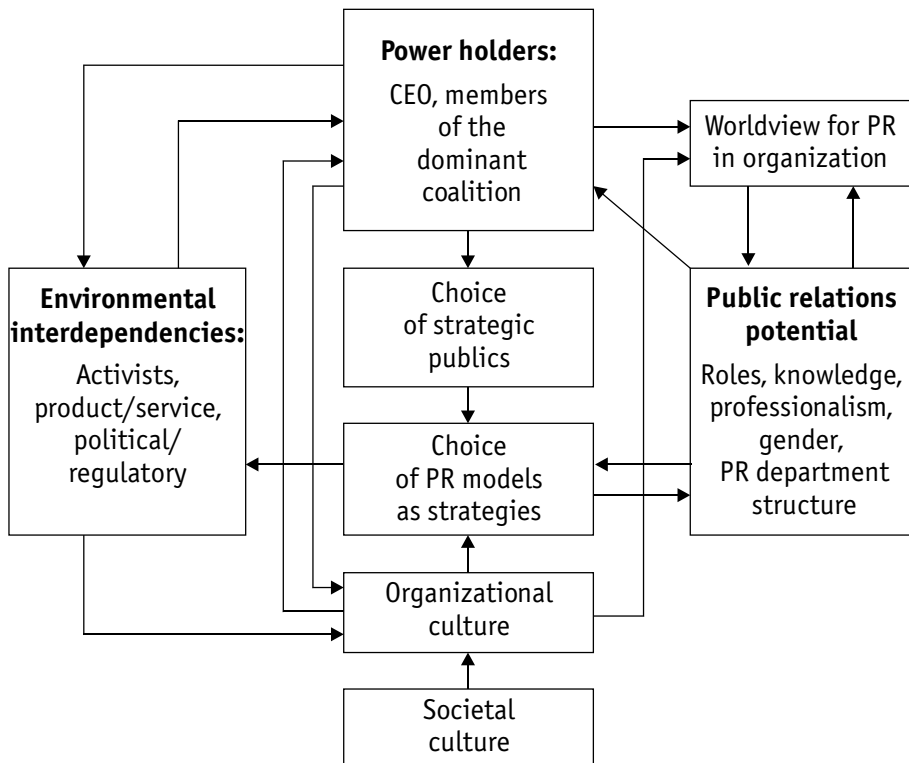


Fig. 1. Factors influencing the choice of a model of public relations

However, public relations practitioners are seldom free from organizational constraints when they deal with external constituencies. The power holders in an organization, the CEO and the key managers in a dominant coalition scan the environment for strategic publics that provide threats or opportunities for an organization. Ideally, they would scan the environment and communicate with crucial yet variant constituencies in the environment through public relations practitioners.

The nature of that communication depends on the model of public relations chosen by the organization power holders. The chosen model is a product of choices made by the dominant coalition under influence of a number of circumstances: (a) the organization's schema for public relations (its conceptual understanding of public relations); (b) the potential of the public relations department to practice different PR models; (c) the existing culture of the organization. Corporate culture thus influences

public relations by providing a broad base of worldview, meaning and values that affect all decisions in the organization — including the choice of a model of public relations and the development of a schema that defines public relations and its purpose.

Public relations practitioners have the greatest impact on decisions made about public relations when some of them are included in the organization's dominant coalition. If a public relations practitioners are not part of the dominant coalition, which is frequently the case, public relations practitioners function more in the implementation of decisions about public relations than in their formulation. Corporate culture also has indirect effects on public relations: corporate culture is affected by the power holders in the dominant coalition, and it affects which key PR managers gain enough power to be in the dominant coalition.

Finally, public relations can affect corporate culture in addition to corporate culture affecting public relations. In particular, internal communication affects organizational culture and, in turn, is affected by it. Externally, both public relations practitioners and power holders must know the prevailing culture or subcultures in the organization's social environment so that they can make appropriate strategic choices of constituencies, as well as communication strategies for interacting with these key constituencies. Such an understanding also will help them improve their capabilities for communicating successfully across cultural boundaries.

## **From Culture as a Whole to Corporate Culture**

The term “culture” till now does not have a unanimously accepted definition in the field of social science, anthropology including. There are numerous interpretations what the term means and what it encompasses. True, E. Tylor's definition of the culture concept [2] is acknowledged by most as the first comprehensive definition of the term. C. Kluckhohn, a noted anthropologist, also attempted to define culture. He considered that “culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values” [3, p. 86].

Particularly values are most often considered as the building blocks of culture. G. Hofstede, for example, saw culture as a “system of values”, elaborating that this system is “the collective programming of the mind,

which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” [4, p. 25]. But at the same time he conceded that his definition was not comprehensive and that it covered only what could be measured.

It should be noted that culture is viewed universally as a construct that reduces ambiguity and facilitates interaction in social settings. People often become unconscious of the existence of cultural idiosyncracies, taking them for granted. Crucial elements of culture, latently embedded in individuals and groups, are projected in the form of shared meanings or symbols [see 5].

So, we could say that culture concept is still diversely defined. But complexity and semantic confusion are bound to multiply when this concept is compounded with the concept of organization. To prove it, we could refer to attempts of a number of the American scholars to define organizational culture and to explain its content.

For example, considering concept of corporate culture as “*the set of dominant values* espoused by an organization”, T. Deal and A. Kennedy posited that these “core values” determine everything, from “what products get manufactured” and to “how workers are treated” [6, p. 31]. T. Peters and R. Waterman, on the contrary, proposed very narrow approach and saw corporate culture as the set of values, which help “in unifying the social dimensions of the organization” that facilitate financial stability [7, p. 106]. Some authors in the course of their analysis of various corporate cultures from the point of corporate excellence posited it does not result from organizational structure alone. They even prescribed what they called the “7-S Framework”, consisting of seven variables each starting with the letter S (System, Strategy, Structure, Style, Staff, Skill, and Shared Values), as their formula for organizational success. “Shared Values” was accorded pivotal place in their framework [7, p. 10].

There are attempts where organizational culture has been referred to the “*rules of the game*” that newcomers must learn in order to become an accepted members of the organization. Hence corporate culture is seen sometimes as “the shared understanding of an organization’s employees — how we do things around here” [8, p. 29], sometimes it addressed as the synthesis of “basic assumptions” that members of an organization share. For example, E. Schein saw basic assumptions as “learned” responses to a group’s problems of survival in its external environment and problems of internal integration. These beliefs operate unconsciously and help members define their view of the organization and its relationship with environment. These beliefs come to be taken for granted because they solve problems repeatedly and reliably. So, corporate

culture, a learned product of such group experiences, evolves only when there is a definable group with a significant history [9, p. 3].

At the same time there is a group of scholars who consider organizational culture as the “*philosophy*” that guides an organization’s policy toward employees and customers. For example, these scholars contend that these philosophies would be passed on and cemented over generations as a result of longtime membership [10]. One can also hear an opinion that organizational culture is a system of meanings, which should be investigated from semiotic point of view — the investigation of the use of signs that allow interpreting communication — as an approach in identifying and analyzing cultures in organizations [11]. Some scholars analyzing organizational stories as an integral component of the corporate culture come to understanding of the corporate culture as an institution [12].

Special understanding of the corporate culture was proposed by American authors A. Wilkins and W. Ouchi [13]. Giving the analogy to such social institution as clan (family), they posited that only under certain circumstances corporate culture does improve organizational efficiency. The authors specified key conditions that encourage the development of “thick” social understandings unique to each organization, which in turn lead to the formation of clans. They placed long history and stable membership as observed in Japanese firms at the top of their list. A longer membership facilitates sharing of the corporate rituals, myths and stories that are crucially vital to the existence of a strong organizational culture of a clan type. Older members can share elements of corporate culture with newer employees and keep the flow of “culture learning” perennial, similar to the acculturation.

Another prerequisite the authors proposed for the formation of a clan is an interaction among members, which facilitates unification of the worldview. Giving the analogy of the first generation immigrant parents who try to infuse their “home” cultures to their young children who are inundated with alternative way of living, Wilkins and Ouchi presented a key condition for birth and subsistence of a clan: the absence of institutional alternatives. They came to the conclusion that organizational culture is more likely to develop when conflicting social institutions are either missing or discredited.

## **Kinds of Corporate Culture**

Scholars try to differentiate various kinds of corporate culture using distinctions between subjective and objective cultures within organiza-

tions. A. Buono, J. Bowditch and J. Lewis, for example, saw subjective culture as a “shared pattern of beliefs, assumptions, and expectations held by organizational members and the group’s characteristic way of perceiving the organization’s environment and its norms” [14, p. 480]. Objective culture, as the authors posited, consists of such organizational artifacts as physical settings, office decor, and executive privileges. The authors contended that the discerning eye could draw many inferences merely by observing an organization’s objective phenomena and processes.

J. Martin and C. Siehl who viewed organizational culture as a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon comprising *subcultures* and *countercultures*, assert that the same organizations may have a number of cultures, one of which is the dominant culture and others — subcultures.

The dominant culture consists of core values shared by a majority of the organization’s members. In addition, the authors contrived at least three types of subcultures: enhancing, orthogonal, and countercultural.

*The enhancing subculture* exists in an “organizational enclave” and advocates loyalty to the core values or the dominant culture of the organization.

*The orthogonal subculture* embodies members who, while being deferent to the core values, also nurture a separate nonconflicting value system unique to their subgroup. Finally, *counterculture*, as the name suggests, runs converse to some or all significant values of the dominant culture. Organizational culture and counterculture exist simultaneously as an “uneasy symbiosis”.

Countercultures are most likely to arise in a distinctly centralized organization that has permitted significant decentralization in a few of its segments, which are generally characterized by a structural boundary and a charismatic leader. It is important to note here that countercultures need not always be counterproductive. Martin and Siehl, for example, consider that countercultures perform “some useful functions for the dominant culture, such as articulating the foundations between appropriate and inappropriate behavior and providing a safe haven for the development of innovative ideas” [15, p. 52].

Although the concept of a distinctive organizational subculture within a larger societal culture prevails in most current literature related to organizational culture, differences in opinions are also present. A. Wilkins and W. Ouchi, for example, observed that the cultures of some organizations are considerably less unique than others. These authors



also argued that because the communities that anthropologists study differ profoundly from organizational settings, the two should not be seen as being analogous. Wilkins and Ouchi argued that societal culture is acquired gradually through intimate contact, a situation not easily replicated in most organizations. E. Schein, in his turn, asserts that the “strength” of culture in an organization is dependent on the “homogeneity and stability” of group membership and the “length and intensity” of shared experiences of the group [9, p. 7].

Despite the differences in opinions, all researchers agree that societal culture does have an impact on organizational culture but these cultures could not always be viewed as parallel.

## **Role of Organizational Culture**

Raising effectiveness of organization is the ultimate aim of any manager. To help managers fulfill this objective, organizational theorists have proposed many methods and approaches including scientific management, organizational structure and corporate strategy. Although at various times these propositions had looked sound, managers of organizations shortly after found them to be inadequate and looked for other approaches for their success. Among them a concept of organizational culture is the most attractive. Organizational culture, despite its complicity and elusiveness, yet, in the manager’s opinion, exerts the most pervasive influence on organizational effectiveness. According to L. Smircich, understanding and managing corporate culture may be a key to managing an effective organization [16].

Just as culture is the central factor that influences the way people in a society behave, so cultures specific to an organization seem to evolve over time and influence the way in which individuals in the organization interact and react to the challenges posed by the environment. This makes it vital for practitioners to understand their organizational culture. T. Deal and A. Kennedy underscored the importance of comprehending organizational culture by affirming that corporations have “values and beliefs to pass along — not just products. They have stories to tell — not just profits to make” [6, p. 15]. Organizations with strong cultures have precedents that employees use as referents when they act in a given situation or attempt to solve problems. In weak cultures that do not record organizational precedents time is wasted in determining appropriate responses to challenges. So, efficiency drastically falls. In a study of several corporations, Deal and Kennedy found that employees

of organizations with stronger cultures feel secure about what they are doing and, therefore, try harder to do it.

Stressing the significance of corporate culture, N. Tichy uses the analogy of a rope to do this, referring to an organization as “the strategic rope” with three intertwined strands. These three strands correspond to three key elements or environments of an organization — technical, political, and cultural. Just as the individual strands of a rope are not discernible from a distance, so a casual observer is most likely to miss the tenuous distinctions among the three corresponding components of organizations. And, just as each major strand in a rope is made up of many substrands, so each organizational environment has many subsystems or subcultures. The author argued that just as the separation of strands weakens a rope, so an organization with clashing subcultures becomes highly vulnerable. The task of strategic managers is to maintain harmony among these three subcultures in order to prevent threats from a turbulent environment. Therefore, the author argued, it is important to know and understand corporate culture [17].

E. Schein, for example, lists three reasons for studying culture in organizations. First, organizational culture is highly “visible” and has an impact on a society, occupation or organization. Second, by understanding culture one can evaluate organizational performance and gain knowledge of how people in it behave and perceive the organization. Finally, knowing the nature and dimensions of the concept of organizational culture facilitates the formulation of a “common frame of reference”, which is vital for analyzing the notion of the organizational culture itself. The author contends that the concept of organizational culture has been often misinterpreted because of attempts to equate it with such terms as “inner-organizational climate”, “organizational philosophy”, “ideology”, “style”, or “how people are managed”, though these meanings are not the essence of the notion of organizational culture. He emphasizes that the notion of corporate culture permits to penetrate in “the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic taken-for-granted fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment” [18, p. 6].

Common assumptions shared by members of an organization serve as a “normative glue” for their unification but organizations must analyze and determine what norms and values members should share and, more critically, what groups within the organizational system should share which values. V. Sathe, for example, asserts that such elements of

culture as shared beliefs facilitate and economize communications and shared values induce higher levels of participation and dedication. However, it becomes a liability when these beliefs are not consonant with the needs of the organization, its members and its constituencies. Having examined five basic organizational processes — communication, cooperation, commitment, decision making, and implementation — Sathe concluded that a better understanding of organizational culture is a key to understanding and proper handling of managerial situations [19].

Since culture constrains organizational strategy, top management must analyze its own culture and learn to manage within boundaries of organization or, if necessary, change its cultural attitudes. The authors argued that here we need to understand the multidimensional nature of organizations — the macro and the micro, organizational and individual, conservative and dynamic — leading us to perceive the “machine-like, organism-like, and culture-like aspects” of organizations.

Thus, although different scholars have used different approaches they are united in the importance they attach to the significant impact that corporate culture has on organizational processes.

### **When is Corporate Culture Most Apparent?**

As a rule, scrutinized attention is paid to the three basic situations when corporate culture becomes most apparent. First, when employees join organization, change their roles after transfer or promotion. Second, when subcultures conflict among themselves or assign stereotypical characteristics (cliche) to one another. Third, when a top management makes and executes key decisions about company strategic direction.

In the first situation, when new employees are infused into an organization, they are very receptive to learning the ropes (rules of the game) of the organization. Trying to understand what is expected from them, new employees are keen to know such factors as potential rewards for excelling in their work, the potential for rising in organizational hierarchy, discipline procedures, etc.

Acculturated employees, on the other hand, respond to new employees in a variety of ways. Some tell stories and offer advice on “proper” behavior, whereas others may ridicule, lecture or shun these new entrants. Analyzing such a situation, A. Wilkins cautioned an organization’s administration to be wary about the “official pronouncements to newcomers”. It is necessary to note that new employees learn more by listening to

the stories they hear and the experiences they encounter. Learning the peculiarities of the organization's corporate culture, new employees, then, become a part of the community [20].

As for the second situation — organizational subcultures conflict — it is necessary to recall earlier mentioned Martin and Siehl who cautioned that countercultures sometimes can be helpful, as well as Wilkins's accentuation that while determining an organization's culture special attention should be paid to the conflict between subcultures: "The conflict between cultures provides a clear picture of the dominant subculture (A) because subculture B adherents are much more aware of differences than are those of subculture A. As a minority group, they feel as if they are sort of mutual protection society that must assert its differences with the majority clearly and defend its members from being overwhelmed. Further, each group seems to characterize the other as representing the dark side of its own most cherished values. Thus, one group's descriptions of the other and their conflicts can produce rich information about the culture and its subcultures" [15, p. 35].

Finally, the third situation is connected with top management decisions. Wilkins identified the behavior of top management as an indicator of organizational culture. Because these senior decision makers control such desired rewards as promotions, budget allocations and work assignments, they are in a position to espouse their value systems on the employees, at least within the confines of the organization. The author identified two ways by which top management could assert its assumption on the organization: (1) through their personal behavior, seen in actions such as what they say, whom they reward and what kinds of actions they encourage, and (2) through the formal channels they create systems of incentives, reporting mechanisms, and evaluation programs. Herewith Wilkins suggested a "culture audit" as a tool for consensus and managing organizations.

A. Buono and his coauthors emphasized that corporate culture plays a critical role in case when organizations merge. Based on a study of culture before and after the merger of two mutual savings banks, the authors argued that in addition to differences in organizational culture that exist between industries, organizations develop distinct cultures even within the same industry. In particular, they studied the perplexity of the employees not only before and during the merger but also its accentuation after the merger when the new entity sought to establish its own culture. They further studied the two medium-size savings banks before and after merger also to understand the influence of organiza-

tional culture on such aspects as job satisfaction, individual behavior and the process underlying organizational mergers. The authors concluded that although culture change and adaptation during mergers is difficult and often resisted, employees eventually will support the change if they can understand the need for it [14, p. 497]. Crucial role in facilitating this understanding and garnering support for employees belongs to the top management who should clearly identify issues appeared in organizational culture.

## **Managing Organizational Culture**

Can managers tailor corporate culture at their will? It is a question still widely debated. Different approaches to this matter are represented by “pragmatist” and “purist” schools of thought. If cultural “pragmatists” answer “yes”, “purists” find it asinine to talk of changing or managing culture.

Viewing culture as a key to productivity and profitability, the pragmatists argue that culture in organizations can be molded to suit goals. The purists, on the contrary, find it unethical to view the concept in terms of dollars and cents. For purists (J. Martin, S. Sitkin, and M. Boehm) culture develops, not with conscious efforts of the top management but under influence of the majority of members in an organization. They contended that the goals of the CEO or the dominant coalition are often incongruent with those on lower rungs of the hierarchical ladder [21].

It is necessary to note that a spectrum of ideas and a number of “pragmatists” considerably exceed “purists”. Their inclination to either position seems to be determined by how they conceptualize culture — as an epitome of deeply rooted unconscious beliefs or a manifestation of more trite characteristics such as reward structures or dress codes, etc.

But, although many agree with “purists” position on the creation of cultures, especially with their ethical position, they feel that cultures can be changed and molded to suit organizational goals.

For example, an extensive study of American and Japanese corporations conducted by W. Ouchi led him to the conclusion that American organizations are prone to have “authoritarian” cultures where decisions are made at the top of the organizational hierarchy. He called these organizations as Type A. His study of similar companies in Japan revealed that Japanese organizations practice consensual participation getting input from all levels of the organizational hierarchy leading to internal democratization. He called organizations with these cultures as Type

J. Ouchi concludes that employee participation in management is a principal key to organizational success. He proposes a step-by-step formula for turning Type A organizations to Type Z (American corporations with Type J characteristics) [10].

C. Siehl, an American scholar, tried to analyze how the corporate culture of an organization changes when its founder resigns and is replaced by a new CEO who has a value system quite different from that of the values of the outgoing CEO. She found that her analysis did not explain, with any degree of certainty, whether culture could be managed. Her study did suggest, however, that during transition time the expression of cultural values possibly could be managed [22, p. 139]. Although some scholars view managing culture and changing culture as diverse phenomena, C. Siehl views them as synonymous.

If come back to analyses of Deal and Kennedy who the same as Martin can be categorized as pragmatists, we can see they believed that corporate culture can be changed [6]. Noting that even strong cultures may sometimes find themselves in “poor alignment” with a changing environment, they listed situations in which managers should take care of development, i.e. consider the change in management of culture.

First, managers must seriously contemplate management of culture when an industry with traditional values finds itself in an environment that is undergoing fundamental changes (as it happened with the American car industry under pressure of Japanese corporations).

Second, managers must consider strategies for cultural change when their industry is highly competitive and the environment changes quickly. Deal and Kennedy argue that companies, which build cultures capable of responding to changes in customer needs will be highly successful, or to say it another way, “building a responsive and adaptive culture may be the only way to institutionalize a real capability to adapt”.

The third situation warranting culture management has to do with self-assessment of corporate performance. When the company is “mediocre or worse” and going downhill, managers must seek solutions through management of culture.

But Deal and Kennedy did not advocate management of culture only during times of poor organizational performance. Their fourth and fifth situations in which managers should contemplate management of culture seriously are: when a corporation is on the verge of expansion and when a company finds itself growing rapidly.

Of course, situations listed by Deal and Kennedy are not exhaustive. But undoubtedly relevant is a need in change and permanent perfection

of corporate culture. Of course, it is the most difficult task facing management.

## **Communication and Organizational Culture**

An objective prerequisite to conceptualizing a link between public relations and organizational culture is the link of organizational culture with communication. A communication approach to organizational culture views organizational communication as a cultural performance. Organizations are viewed as theaters in which members perform various roles based on the situation, their statuses and responsibilities.

For example, the CEO treats the secretary in the same way as the general manager politely but both players know their places in the stratified relationship. Although the notion of “organization as theater” does not coincide with the established practice of viewing it as machine or organism, this notion suggests that communication in an organization is “situationally relative and variable”. Supporters of such approach contend that organizational performance of a dialogue types staged by multiple actors in process of organizational communication is a cultural performance containing ritual, social, political context, and passion as well. Such analysis of organizational culture is similar to the way an anthropologist studies “folk tales and ritual practices of a culture”. In this context culture is viewed as a process rather than an artifact.

A similar view takes E. Bormann defining communication as “the human social processes by which people create, raise, and sustain group consciousness” [23, p. 100]. He sees public consciousness as a significant constituent in the culture of a group or an organization. At the same time he adds that in the communicative framework, culture is “the sum total of ways of living, organizing, and communing built up in a group of human beings and transmitted to newcomers by means of verbal and nonverbal communication” (*ibid.*).

Regarding communication as an inevitable factor of the development of organizational culture, scholars conclude that without components like stories, rites, rituals, artifacts and technology, culture cannot develop in the organizational context. More than that culture could not be created, sustained, transmitted and changed without such social interaction elements as modeling, imitation, instruction, correction, negotiation, story-telling, gossip, remediation, confrontation, observation, etc., all of which are based on communication process.

Models of communication that are differentiated between cultural groups are also important. For example, traditional model, identified by H. Broms and H. Gahmberg [24] as the first one, is built on the principles of communication between information sender and receiver. The second model — “autocommunication”, is the phenomenon through which one repeatedly communicates inwardly to oneself. Often autocommunication does not add to knowledge or information but serves an important function of enhancing the “ego”. Such internal communication as writing a diary or reading a religious text helps the autocommunicator clarify thoughts by self-cueing. Communication that is directed to external recipients (a memo, e.g.) also facilitates autocommunication. The authors recalled Lotman’s reference to these two forms of communication as representing two divergent cultures — Eastern and Western.

## **Relationship between Culture and Public Relations**

At the beginning of this article we referred to Grunig’s Figure, which demonstrates the relationship between culture and public relations. According to this figure, culture external to an organization (societal culture) can impose a paradigm or a worldview upon the organization. The dominant national culture (regional or local in particular) can affect an organization directly because employees are enculturated outside the organization, as well as inside.

Furthermore, external culture affects the environmental interdependencies of an organization. On a continuum, external culture may vary from an open, pluralistic or democratic system to a closed, authoritarian or autocratic one. Of course, organizational culture need not be consonant with a society’s culture but external influences cannot be completely avoided. Thus, the differences in public relations according to a normative theory of cross-cultural public relations for multinational or other organizations could also have geographically conditioned character.

One should have in mind that even general models of public relations selected by organizations may range along a continuum from asymmetrical to symmetrical and that these models covary with broader cultural presuppositions — ranging from pluralistic to authoritarian. At the same time it is necessary to mind about theories based on opposite presuppositions: centralized *versus* decentralized structures; authoritarian and segmented vs. integrated and participatory management styles,



etc. Thus, theoretical presuppositions about PR are embedded in broader presuppositions of both organizational and societal cultures.

Herewith researchers made a number of theoretical propositions. *The first one is*: public relations in an organization will reflect both the organization's internal and external culture. It means that public relations manager or external PR counselor would have an extremely difficult job implementing a normative theory of how PR should be practiced. They should take into account interdependence between changes in the way of public relations practice and changes in organizational culture.

This proposition in particular could be traced in the literature on the management of cultural change. For example, if we take the purist view (see J. Martin, S. Sitkin, and M. Boehm) [21], that organizations are cultures being the product of everyone in the organization over a long period of time, we would have to conclude that changing a culture and its presuppositions about public relations will be extremely difficult if at all possible. This view because of its absolutism is rejected by majority of scholars and PR practitioners. In addition, we have to acknowledge the difficulty of changing public relations, which was articulated by representatives of this view.

The pragmatic view, in contrast, identifies the strategic opportunities that open a space for changes in culture and in presuppositions about public relations; for example, when an organization's culture is misaligned with its environment, when the environment changes, when the organization performs poorly, or when the organization expands, grows rapidly, or is divested. The public relations manager, therefore, who wants to gain power in the organization or who is waiting for a strategic opportunity to suggest a new, more effective model of public relations should be aware of this space of opportunity to make a decisive move in the organization or to suggest changes in public relations policy.

Herewith, *the second proposition* is: it is expedient for public relations managers to change the model of public relations practiced in an organization when organizational culture is changing.

The literature we have reviewed testifies the crucial role that internal communication plays in development, continuation and revision of organizational culture. The model in the above-mentioned Grunig's Figure demonstrates the impact of internal public relations upon organizational culture. So, a communication manager charged with developing an internal communication system to bring about a change in culture or a communication system for a new culture must be aware of the close relationship between communication and culture.

The literature on subcultures and countercultures in organizations offers two intriguing ideas for practicing and understanding PR. First, countercultures create conflicts in organizations, conflicts that require managing internal communication. Thus, identifying countercultures with cultural audits should be an important component of internal communication audits. Second, PR departments may develop their own countercultures, especially when a public relations manager is not a part of the dominant coalition. If that is the case, we must ask how the public relations counterculture can maintain itself while waiting for an opportunity to make changes in the dominant culture. On the other side, public relations education and its subsequent effect on professionalism hold the answer.

Herewith, *the final proposition is*: a PR department that has high potential (because of managerial roles, education in public relations, and professionalism) regularly will develop a counterculture when the organization's culture and worldview for PR do not reflect the presuppositions and worldview for public relations of the department.

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